

PUGWASH CONTINUING COMMITTEE

Chairman: The Earl Russell

14th March, 1959.

Dear Dr. Lederberg,

During the last two years three international meetings of scientists, known as Pugwash Conferences, were held to discuss the critical problems posed for mankind as a result of the advance of science. At the last conference, held in Austria in September, 1958, a Continuing Committee was elected to organize further activities.

One of the activities contemplated by the Committee is the calling of a private meeting of eminent microbiologists and chemists to consider the problems of biological and chemical warfare. This letter is in the nature of an informal enquiry whether you would be interested in participating in such a meeting.

The purpose of the meeting would be to examine the potentialities of biological and chemical warfare both as weapons of mass destruction and as a factor increasing international tensions, through the possibilities of smaller countries being capable of producing such weapons. An assessment would be made of the strategic and tactical possibilities in warfare with biological and chemical weapons, as compared with nuclear weapons.

The discussions would be completely private but the group may find it possible to formulate, at the end, a statement outlining the general conclusions reached, so that governments, scientists and the public would have the benefit of an authoritative estimate of biological and chemical warfare in the overall problem of achieving world security.

Attached is a list of scientists to whom I am writing concerning this matter. Following receipt of the answers, a decision would be taken on the convening of such a meeting. Tentatively, the meeting would be held in September in North America or Europe. Expenses of the participants would be met out of the funds we hope to have available.

The Conference would probably last about one week. In order to ensure the maximum use of the time, working documents would have to be prepared in advance by various participants and circulated to Conference members before the meeting. Suggested topic headings for the Conference are attached and we should welcome any comments on these.

Russell, B.

Please send your reply to:-

Professor J. Rotblat,
The Medical College of St. Bartholomew's Hospital,
Charterhouse Square, London, E.C.1

Yours sincerely,

Bertrand Russell

Dr. Joshua Lederberg,
Department of Biology,
Stanford University,
Stanford,
California,
U.S.A..

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A.

Suggested topics for Conference on
Biological and Chemical Warfare.

1. The potentialities of chemicals, bacteria and their toxins, viruses and rickettsial organisms, as weapons of war against human, animal populations and plant life, when used (a) as a strategic weapon for mass attack; (b) as a tactical weapon in localized areas.
2. Production and delivery requirements of these weapons for warfare purposes by countries of differing economic and scientific development.
3. Problems of control through international agreement.

B.

Scientists to whom this letter is sent

Australia

Sir F. Macfarlane Burnet

Canada

Dr. Brock Chisholm
Dr. A. J. Rhodes

China

Dr. Tang Fei-Fang

Denmark

Dr. Preben von Magnus

France

Dr. Andre Lwoff
Dr. P. Thibault

South Africa

Dr. J. H. S. Gear

Sweden

Dr. Sven Gard

U.K.

Dr. A. Bradford Hill
Dr. A. Haddow
Dr. A. A. Miles
Dr. Kenneth F. Smith
Dr. E. T. S. Spooner

U.S.A.

Dr. Rene J. Dubos
Dr. Renato Dulbecco
Dr. F. O. Holmes
Dr. Martin M. Kaplan
Dr. Joshua Lederberg
Dr. Franklin MacLean
Dr. Kenneth F. Maxcy
Dr. K. F. Meyer
Dr. J. H. Muller
Dr. Theodor Rosebury
Dr. Albert Sabin
Dr. Wendell M. Stanley
Dr. Max Theiler

U.S.S.R.

Dr. A. A. Smorodintsev
Dr. V. M. Zhdanov

(In addition, several nuclear physicists and other people with knowledge on methods of delivery of weapons may attend).